
Government of the District of Columbia



Executive Office of the Mayor

Committee on Government Reform
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom Davis, Chairman

Status of the District of Columbia's Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities Administration

Testimony of
Robert Bobb
City Administrator/Deputy Mayor
District of Columbia

Friday, June 16, 2006
2154 Rayburn House Office Building
10:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chairman Davis, and members of the Committee on Government Reform.

I am Robert Bobb, City Administrator and Deputy Mayor for Washington, DC. I am here today on behalf of Mayor Anthony Williams.

It is my pleasure to address the Committee concerning the work that has been and is being done in the District to improve the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Administration (MRDDA). Mayor Williams and I remain committed to making the necessary changes.

MRDDA is facing tremendous and diverse challenges. As you are well aware, MRDDA has struggled for years to improve its service delivery and to attract and maintain competent providers.

In addition to addressing service delivery concerns, the Williams Administration is working to ensure that the day-to-day management of the agency is strengthened. For the past several months, I have been a regular participant at the weekly meeting with Deputy Mayor Brenda Donald Walker and the MRDDA senior management. During our budget review process, we have been working with the District Council to make certain that the agency is appropriately funded.

In selecting the new MRDDA administrator, Kathy Sawyer, the Mayor and I sought a strong director with a proven track record of turning a troubled agency around. A lot can be accomplished in the next 6 ½ months, and we are convinced that Ms. Sawyer is the right person to be at the helm. During her tenure, we will also conduct a search to identify candidates for the permanent director.

In summary, we truly believe that we are laying the right foundation for MRDDA so that it will provide the necessary services and care that we all want for District residents facing mental and developmental challenges.

Let me also state unequivocally that we are opposed to the appointment of a receivership. The Williams Administration continues to seek the necessary changes to make MRDDA a better functioning operation. Yes, the task has taken longer than we anticipated; however, with the concerted attention the agency is under – internally and externally – and with the addition of a nationally recognized expert in these matters, we are convinced that improvements will be made before the end of the year.

Deputy Mayor Donald Walker will provide more information regarding our next steps. I will be happy to address your questions.

Thank you.